DC
BATMAN
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NO. 253
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BAT MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE BATMAN ASKS... "WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL--?"
ONLY The Shadow KNOWS!

Who Knows, What Evil--?
It is the dark time at Gotham Freight Yards, when dawn is yet no more than a distant promise,,, a time when furtive men do furtive things,,, and when the
BATMAN
moves like an avenging wraith!
Yes, the Batman is here this night— and so is another--!
THE Shadow
RAILWAYS
From the secret annals of THE BATMAN as told to Denny O'Neil, writer, Irv Novick and Dick Giordano, artists, Julius Schwartz, editor.
5-1469
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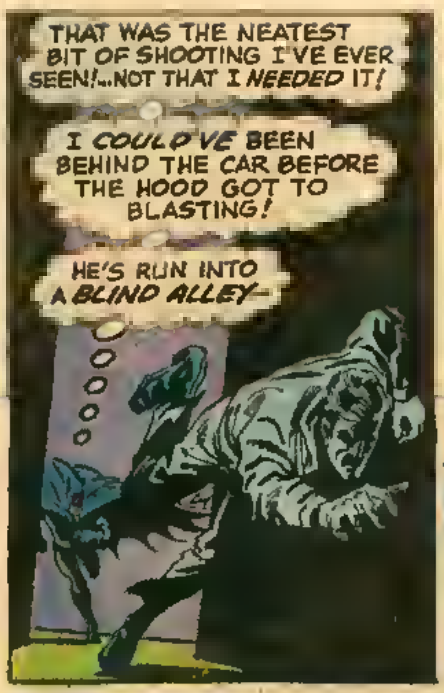
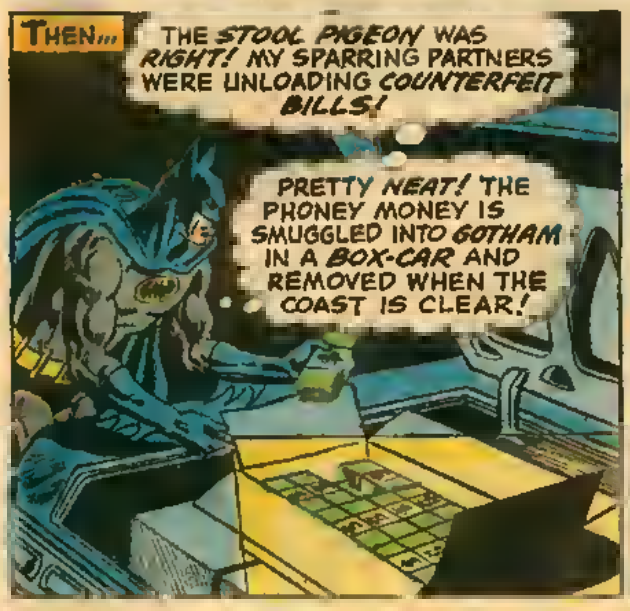
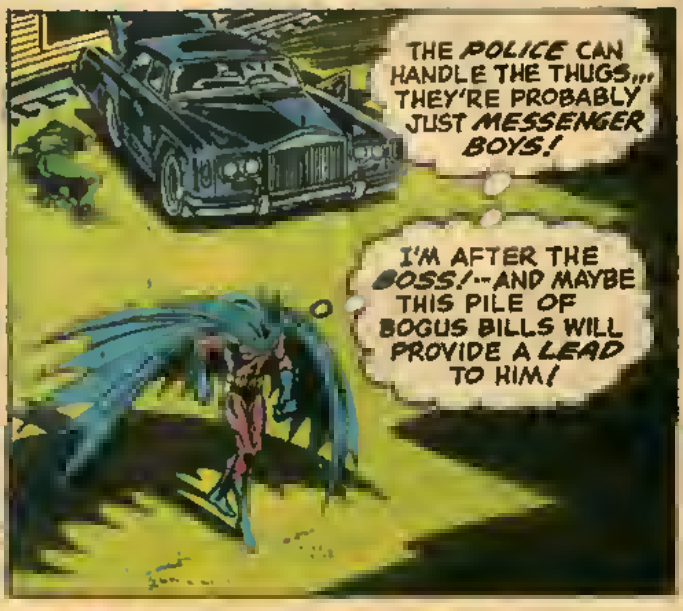
THE BATMAN--! I DIDN'T SIGN ON TO TANGLE WITH HIM!
THEN YOU'RE GETTING A BARGAIN... MORE THAN YOU ASKED FOR!
YEOWWW!
WHACK!
YOU SHOULD HAVE LET THE WEAPON BE!
A FAST GUN YOU'RE NOT!
AL--SHOOT! BEFORE HE CREAMS ME--
I GOT 'IM IN MY SIGHTS! ONE SQUEEZE OF THE TRIGGER AN'--
--EEEEH!
BUT BEFORE THE THUG'S FINGER CAN TIGHTEN, THE FLAT CRACK OF AN AUTOMATIC SLAPS THE AIR... AND RIPS THE REVOLVER FROM HIS HAND--
AGGH!
RAK!
I'M GETTIN' OUTA HERE!
I HAVE A FRIEND SOME-PLACE... A VERY EXCELLENT MARKSMAN-TYPE FRIEND!
2


THAT WAS THE NEATEST BIT OF SHOOTING I'VE EVER SEEN!..NOT THAT I NEEDED IT!
I COULD'VE BEEN BEHIND THE CAR BEFORE THE HOOD GOT TO BLASTING!
HE'S RUN INTO A BLIND ALLEY—

--HE'S TRAPPED...
HUH?
--GONE?!
HE COULDN'T HAVE ESCAPED...
...BUT HE DID!

AS THE CRIME-FIGHTER PAUSES DISMAYED, A MARROW-CHILLING SOUND REACHES HIS EARS...
THAT LAUGH...
HA-HA-HA
...COMING FROM SOMEWHERE...
...AND NOWHERE!


THEN...
THE STOOL PIGEON WAS RIGHT! MY SPARRING PARTNERS WERE UNLOADING COUNTERFEIT BILLS!
PRETTY NEAT! THE PHONEY MONEY IS SMUGGLED INTO GOTHAM IN A BOX-CAR AND REMOVED WHEN THE COAST IS CLEAR!


THE POLICE CAN HANDLE THE THUGS... THEY'RE PROBABLY JUST MESSENGER BOYS!
I'M AFTER THE BOSS!--AND MAYBE THIS PILE OF BOGUS BILLS WILL PROVIDE A LEAD TO HIM!

LATER IN A CAVERN BENEATH A SUBURBAN MANSION...
IT'S INCREDIBLE, ALFRED! THE ENGRAVING AND THE PAPER USED IN THESE COUNTERFEITS ARE GOOD! FINE IMITATIONS OF THE REAL McCOY--
--BUT THE INK IS PERFECT!

THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IT AND THE STUFF THE GOVERNMENT USES!
BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MASTER BRUCE! I FOUND SOMETHING OF POSSIBLE INTEREST IN THE STACK OF MISBEGOTTEN MONIES!

SEEMS TO BE A PIECE TORN FROM A MAP, ALFRED!
PRECISELY, SIR! I BEG YOU TO NOTE ONE OF THE ROADS HAS BEEN TRACED IN INK, INDICATING SOMEONE HAS MADE RECENT USE OF IT!
I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF CONSULTING OUR CHART FILE, SIR! I BELIEVE YOU'LL FIND THE TORN SCRAP MATCHES A SECTION OF THIS--
--A MAP OF ARIZONA!
ALFRED... YOU'RE A TREASURE! REMIND ME TO GIVE YOU A RAISE!
ARIZONA
MEANWHILE, IN DOWNTOWN GOTHAM--
HEY, PARTNER-- YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?
SOME DUDE HANDCUFFED TO THE LAMPPOST! MAN...THIS BEAT GETS FREAKIER AN' FREAKIER!
YOU RECOGNIZE HIM? HE'S AL GROMM... THE MISSING MEMBER OF THE MOB THE BATMAN NAILED A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO!
CHECK THOSE EYES!
HE'S EITHER STONED...
...OR MAYBE HYPNOTIZED!
LISTEN...HE'S MUMBLING SOMETHING!
...TUMBLEWEED CROSSING... TUMBLEWEED CROSSING...
TUMBLEWEED CROSSING... YOU MIGHT CALL THE PLACE A TOWN -- A GENERAL STORE, A GAS STATION, A HOTEL CUSTER MIGHT HAVE STAYED AT...
...YEAH, YOU MIGHT CALL IT A TOWN! BRUCE WAYNE ISN'T SURE, AS HE ALIGHTS FROM A BUS THIS DUSKY DESERT EVENING...
GAS
THE MARKINGS ON THE MAP END HERE! NOT A VERY LIKELY SPOT TO FIND A COUNTERFEITING OPERATION!
HOTEL
4

YUH'D BE BRUCE WAYNE? I'M BAMMY STONE, FROM THE HO-TEL! I GOT YORE RESERVATION-- NOT THAT YUH NEEDED IT!
WE AIN'T BEEN FULL UP SINCE TEDDY ROOSEVELT PASSED THROUGH IN NINETEEN AN' ELEVEN!
HELLO, MR. STONE!
ER... ANY OTHER STRANGERS STAYING WITH YOU?
HOTEL
FUNNY YUH ASK-- THAR IS A NEWCOMER!
SAYS HE'S A SCIENTIST FROM THE STATE... TAKIN' WATER SAMPLES IN THE HILLS TO THE WEST!
PLUMB FOOLISH! THAT WATER AIN'T FIT FER COYOTES! IT'S POISONED WITH GUNK THAT RUNS DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS!
SUDDENLY, BRUCE PAUSES... COCKS HIS HEAD-- AND LISTENS TO THE DISTANT THRUM OF ENGINES...
RRM-RRM-RRM
GOL-DING! BEST HEAD FOR COVER, WAYNE! IT'S THEM NOMADS AN' THEIR DANG DUNE-BUGGIES--
--COMIN' TO TEAR THINGS UP AGAIN!
R-ROAR-R
A CLOUD OF DUST COMING NEAR... AND THE THRUM GROWS TO A ROAR--
--AND, ABRUPTLY, THE SLEEPY HAMLET IS FILLED WITH DESERT VEHICLES AND THEIR HOWLING OCCUPANTS!
HOTEL
HOTEL
EE-O YAAHOOOOOO
GAS

FUNNY... THEY'RE HOWLING LIKE BANSHEES... AND HANDLING THOSE BUGGIES LIKE THEY WERE INDY RACERS!
BUT THEY'RE DOING NO REAL DAMAGE!
OBVIOUSLY, THE SITUATION CALLS FOR QUESTIONS--

--AND QUESTIONS ARE A SPECIALTY OF... THE BATMAN!

OKAY BOYO! ON YOUR FEET! I WANT CONVERSATION WITH YOU!
I AIN'T MUCH FOR WORDS--

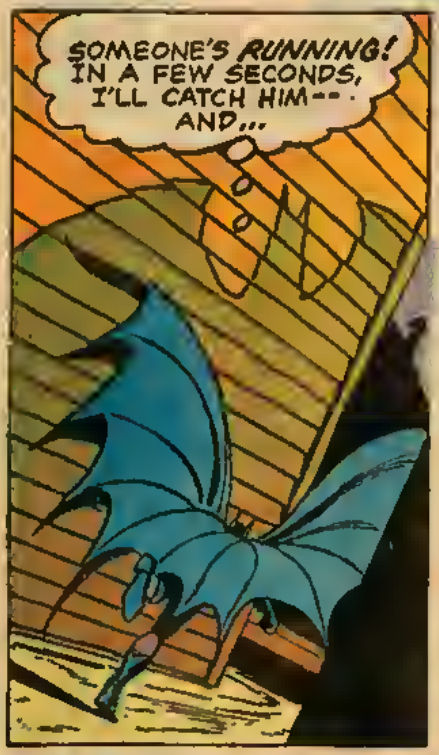
--I'M BETTER AT FISTS!
OH... REALLY? I WOULDN'T HAVE GUESSED!

JUDGING FROM YOUR TECHNIQUE, I'D SAY YOU DON'T KNOW A FIST FROM A POPSICLE!

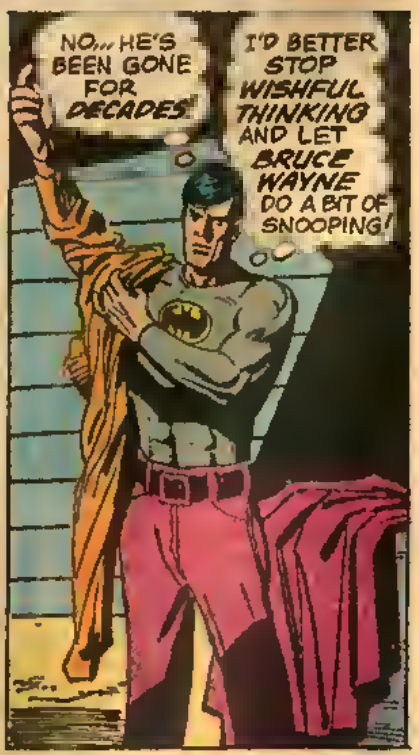
BETTER TRY TALKING! AS A PUNCH-OUT ARTIST, YOU'RE A FLOP!
UNNGH!

ANY OF THE REST OF YOU SWEETHEARTS FEEL LIKE A FRACAS?
NAW... WE GOT YOU OUTNUMBERED-- AN' BESIDES, YOU WON FAIR AN' SQUARE!
WE AIN'T BULLIES, MISTER--!
THEN WHO ARE YOU?
JUST A BUNCH OF... WELL, THE FANCY WORD IS NON-CONFORMISTS!
WE'RE SICK OF CIVILIZATION! WE CAME TO THE DESERT FOR PEACE TO LIVE THE LIFE WE CHOOSE!
SO WHY THE RUCKUS?
WE WERE PAID TO, IS WHY! A GUY GIVE US THESE BUGGIES AN' A THOUSAND DOLLARS!
HE SAID IF WE HASSLED THE TOWNSPEOPLE EVERY TUESDAY, HE'D PAY US ANOTHER THOUSAND!
HE CAME TO WHERE WE WERE CAMPED... IN THE OLD INDIAN CLIFF-DWELLINGS!
TOLD US TO PITCH OUR TENTS TO THE SOUTH OF TUMBLEWEED CROSSING AN' WAIT!
CAN I SEE WHAT HE PAID YOU WITH?
SURE-- HERE!
AS I THOUGHT... FOOL'S GOLD!
YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN FOOL'S MONEY!
I'D ADVISE YOU TO BURN IT-- PRONTO!
BE SMART-- LEAVE THE COUNTY-- AND KEEP GOING!
OR ELSE YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF IN WORSE TROUBLE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE!

MMMM... IT'S BEGINNING TO MAKE SENSE! THOSE DESERT RATS BRIBED--A MYSTERIOUS SCIENTIST CHECKING LOCAL WATER... AND--
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!
--THAT LAUGH AGAIN! COMING FROM BEHIND THE HOTEL!


SOMEONE'S RUNNING! IN A FEW SECONDS, I'LL CATCH HIM--. AND...

...AND NOTHING... EXCEPT SHADOWS!
I WONDER... CAN IT BE HIM?--REALLY HIM?

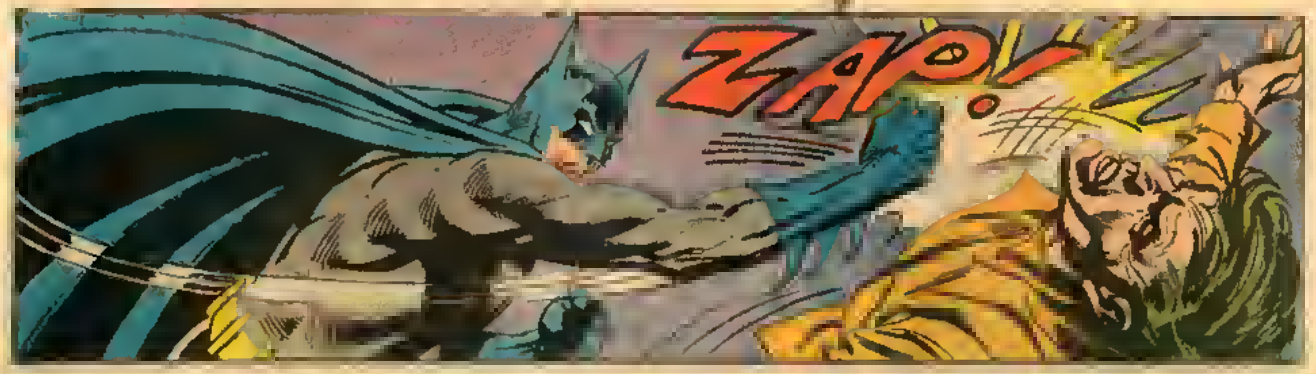

NO... HE'S BEEN GONE FOR DECADES!
I'D BETTER STOP WISHFUL THINKING AND LET BRUCE WAYNE DO A BIT OF SNOOPING!

SOON, IN THE HOTEL DINING ROOM...
WAYNE, MEET YORE FELLER GUEST--LAMONT CRANSTON!
MY PLEASURE!

BAMMY SAYS YOU'RE A SCIENTIST... STUDYING THE LOCAL STREAMS!
YES! THEY'RE LOADED WITH UNUSUAL MINERAL DEPOSITS-- UNIQUE ON THIS CONTINENT!
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

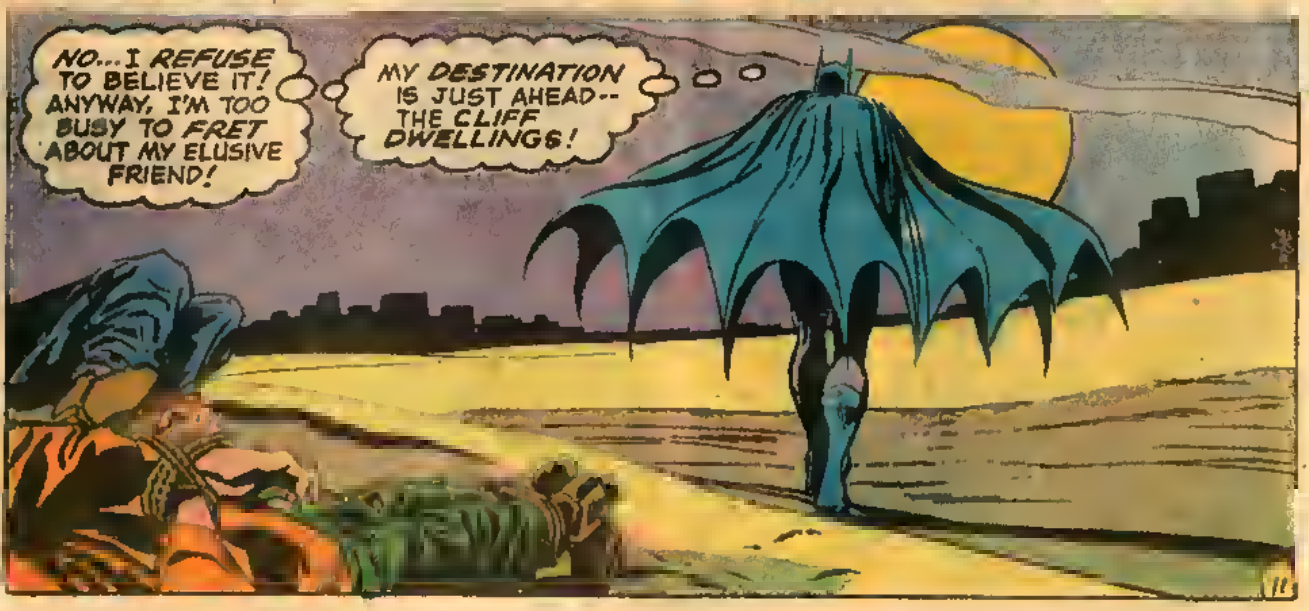
TELL ME... COULD THE WATER BE USED IN MANUFACTURING... OH, SAY-- INK?
ACTUALLY, IT COULD!
ARE YOU A DEVOTEE OF SCIENCE, MISTER WAYNE?
NO... JUST A CURIOUS BUSYBODY!
NICE TALKING TO YOU! BE SEEING YOU, MR. CRANSTON!
YOU CAN COUNT ON IT!
BAMMY, I'D ENJOY A MOONLIGHT DRIVE!
HAVE YOU A JEEP I COULD BORROW?
NOPE! BUT I'LL RENT YOU ONE--FER A TWENTY!
IT'S A DEAL!
THEN...
THE INVESTIGATION IS FINISHED! THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO IS GO INTO THE DESERT--
--AND NAB MYSELF A MOB OF COUNTERFEITERS!
BRUCE [BATMAN] WAYNE SEEMS TO HAVE CRACKED THE CASE! HAVE YOU?
A COSTUME-CHANGE AND A FEW MILES LATER...
UNLIKE MANY PROBLEMS, THIS ONE WAS EASY TO SOLVE ONCE I'D COLLECTED THE NECESSARY INFORMATION!
THE GANG IS OPERATING IN THIS AREA BECAUSE THE WATER SUPPLY IS IDEAL FOR MAKING INK!
THE PAYMENT TO THE BUGGY BUNCH WAS CLEARLY A BLIND--
--TO GET THEM AWAY FROM THE OLD CLIFF-DWELLINGS! WHICH MAKE FOR A PERFECT HIDE-OUT!
PEACEFUL NIGHT... HARD TO BELIEVE I'M ON MY WAY TO VIOLENCE--!
THERE HE IS!

AS IF IN REPLY TO THE BATMAN'S UNSPOKEN THOUGHT, RIFLE-SHOTS ECHO! LEAD BORES THROUGH THE JEEP'S TIRES—
SPEEANG!
BLEOW
SNIPERS... BEHIND THE BOULDER! MAYBE I HAVEN'T GOT THE PROBLEM SOLVED!
IT'S A GOOD HUNDRED YARDS TO THEM... A LONG DISTANCE TO COVER WHILE DODGING BULLETS!
BWF!
ZING!
HOWEVER--
SOME KIND OF AIRCRAFT! I'D SWEAR IT'S AN AUTOGYRO... AN EARLY VERSION OF THE HELICOPTER!
BUT... THOSE HAVEN'T BEEN USED FOR YEARS!
WHATEVER IT IS--
-- IT'S SAVING MY HIDE!
--DISTRACTING THE GUNMEN FOR A FEW SECONDS--
BAM
BAM
BAM
--AND FOR SOMEONE WITH MY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE, A FEW SECONDS IS PLENTY!
CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING.
10


ZAP!

ZONK!

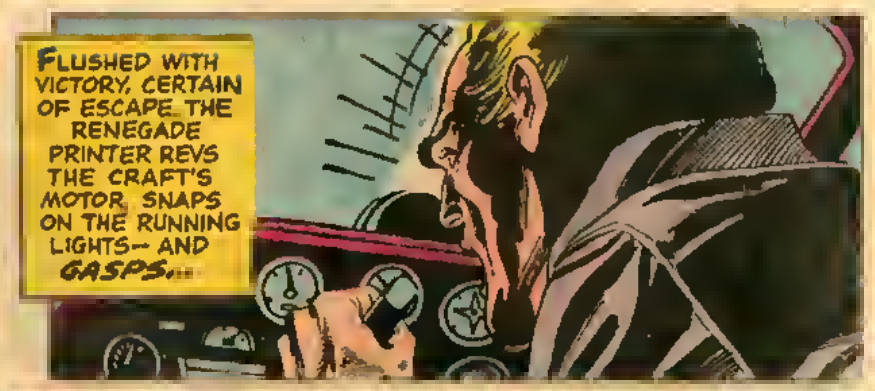
UNSEEN HELPER AGAIN... CHARGING INTO THE FRAY LIKE THE CAVALRY IN A JOHN FORD WESTERN!
ONLY-- INSTEAD OF A PONY HE'S RIDING A... CRATE!
HEY! YOU IN THE AIR! I WANT TO THANK...
HA-HA-HA
AND THE BATMAN'S CALL IS ANSWERED BY...
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA
--THAT LAUGH! I'M CHILLED FROM COWL TO BOOTS... AND HOT BECAUSE OF THE WIND!
AN OLD-FASHIONED PLANE... A SUPERB MARKSMAN... AND A LAUGH LIKE A... BLIZZARD!
CAN THEY ADD UP TO... HIM?!


NO... I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT! ANYWAY, I'M TOO BUSY TO FRET ABOUT MY ELUSIVE FRIEND!
MY DESTINATION IS JUST AHEAD-- THE CLIFF DWELLINGS!

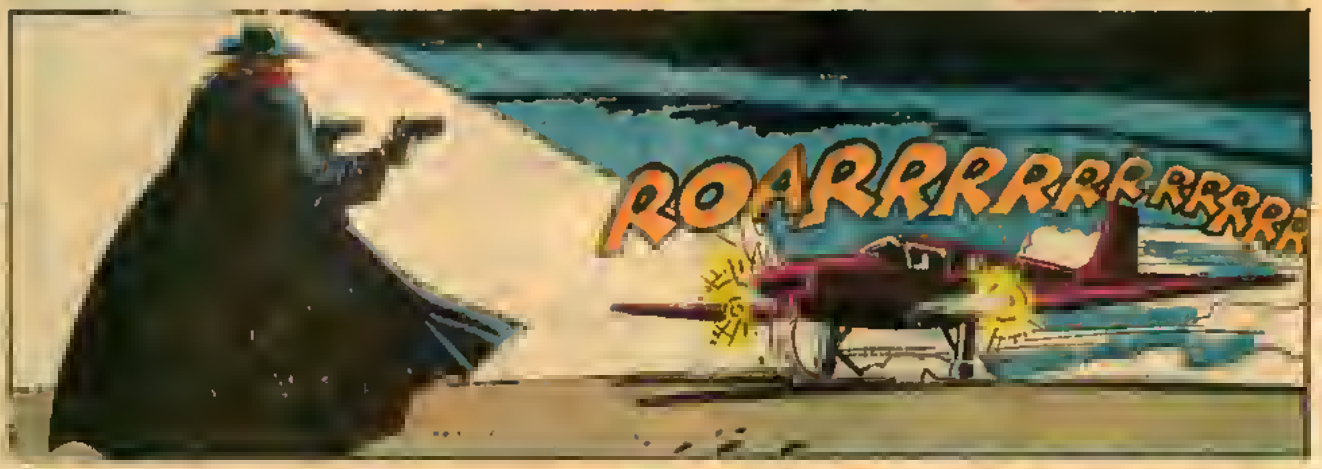
CLIFF-DWELLINGS...ANCIENT INDIAN HOMES HEWN FROM CLIFFSIDES BEFORE WHITE MEN EVEN DREAMED OF THE EXISTENCE OF AMERICA--
FOR A FLEETING INSTANT THE BATMAN HALTS AWED...
...THEN HE TURNS TO HIS TASK...
THEY MUST HAVE TRANSPORTATION! IT'S A CINCH THEY DON'T WALK ACROSS TWENTY MILES OF DESOLATION--
--AND THERE IT IS! A SMALL PLANE EQUIPPED WITH SKIS FOR LANDING IN SOFT SAND!
I'VE GOTTEN THE LAY OF THE LAND... LOCATED THE ENEMY...
--ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO... SIC 'EM!
INSIDE THE MUD-AND-ROCK WALLS AT THE TOP OF THE LADDER...
THE BOSS SENT WORD THE BATMAN NABBED THE BOYS IN GOTHAM!
TOUGH BERRIES TO THEM! WE'RE SITTIN' PRETTY!
INK
WE FINISH THIS BATCH... CLOSE THE OPERATION-- AND SPLIT FOR L.A., ST. LOOIE, MEXICO CITY...!
YEAH! WE GOT ENOUGH PHONEY CASH TO LIVE LIKE GREEK SHIPOWNERS!
DON'T PUT A DOWN-PAYMENT ON A YACHT JUST YET, SCUM!
THE BATMAN!
CONTINUED ON 2 45 PAGE FOLLOWING.
12

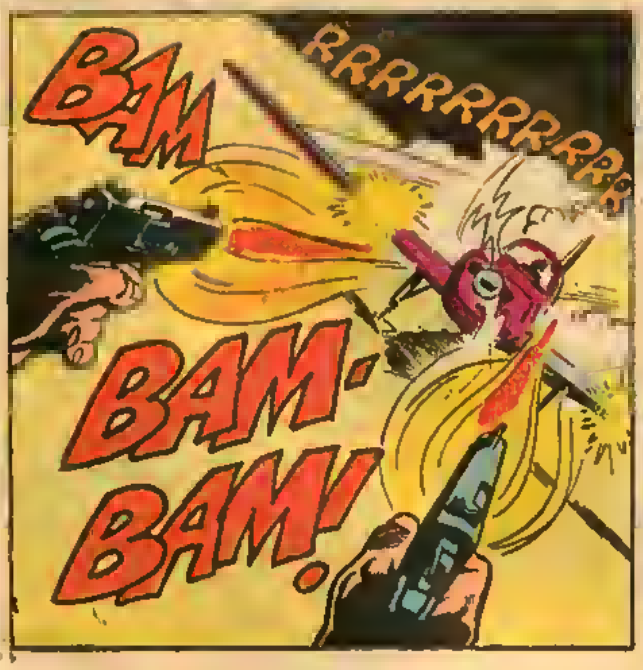
YEP.. IN PERSON . AND YIVID COLOR AND VIVIDER KNUCKLES!
I'LL WASTE 'IM... OOGH!
LADDY, YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW BLASTED OFTEN I'VE HEARD THAT THREAT!
ALWAYS. SOME CREEP IS GOING TO WASTE ME. NAIL ME--
--CUT ME. DROP ME! I WISH SOMEONE WOULD THREATEN TO STUB MY TOE-- FOR A CHANGE!
DON'T FEEL NEGLECTED! DO YOUR SILLY STUNT... DIVE FOR THE TOMMYGUN! I'LL GIVE YOU A BREAK--
--I'LL LET YOU GET HALF-WAY THERE!
I GOT A DIFFERENT TRICK IN MIND--!
I AIN'T A HIT-MAN... I'M A PRINTER! I USE INK!
MY EYES--
--BURNING LIKE VOLCANOES! AND I DESERVE THE PAIN--
--THE PRICE I PAY FOR STUPID OVERCONFIDENCE!

I HEAR THE PLANE ENGINE STARTING... DON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF CATCHING HIM!
RRRRR-MMMMMM


FLUSHED WITH VICTORY, CERTAIN OF ESCAPE THE RENEGADE PRINTER REVS THE CRAFT'S MOTOR, SNAPS ON THE RUNNING LIGHTS— AND GASPS...

...FOR THE VERY DARKNESS ITSELF SEEMS TO THICKEN, CONGEAL...
...AND IN THE TWIN BEAMS STANDS A TALL FIGURE, A SILVER-PLATED AUTOMATIC IN EACH HAND...


ROARRRRRRRRRRRRR

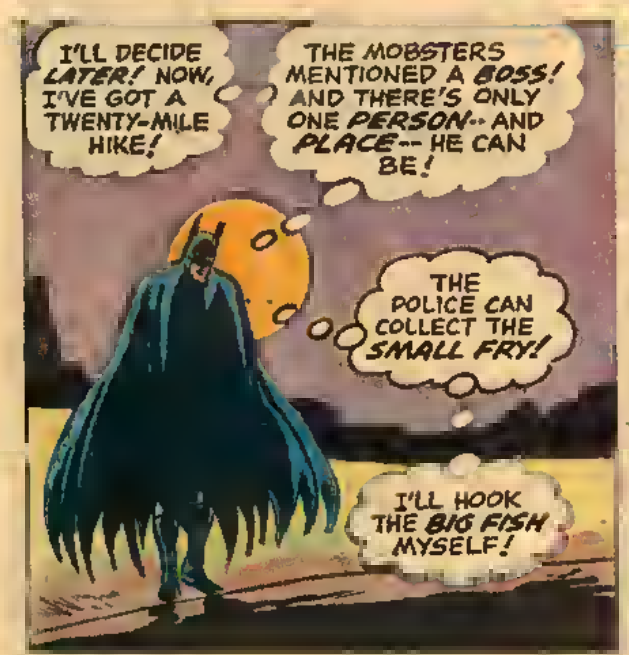

BAM
RRRRRRRRRR
BAM-
BAM!

SSK-RREEEEEEEEE...!

MY VISION FINALLY CLEARED... BUT TOO LATE TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED!
APPARENTLY THE THUG FOULED HIS TAKE-OFF!

AT LEAST HE'S ALIVE! —MUST BE DELIRIOUS! HE'S BABBLING!
...TERRIBLE... CAME FROM NOWHERE... LONG COAT... HAT...

...S-STARING AT ME... STARING HOLES INTO MY SKULL...!
HE'S DESCRIBING... HIM!
IS IT POSSIBLE... HE HAS RETURNED?


I'LL DECIDE LATER! NOW, I'VE GOT A TWENTY-MILE HIKE!
THE MOBSTERS MENTIONED A BOSS! AND THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON-- AND PLACE-- HE CAN BE!
THE POLICE CAN COLLECT THE SMALL FRY!
I'LL HOOK THE BIG FISH MYSELF!

IT BEGAN AT DAWN IN GOTHAM CITY... IT IS DESTINED TO END AT DAWN IN TUMBLEWEED CROSSING...
HOTEL
HOTEL

LIGHT COMING FROM BEHIND HIS DOOR... GOOD! MISTER CRANSTON IS AWAKE--
--I WON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR HIM TO DRESS!
HE FIGURES TO BE THE GANG'S LEADER! BAMMY SAID HE'S THE ONLY NEWCOMER AROUND--
--AND HE'S BEEN CHECKING THAT WATER SUPPLY THE COUNTERFEITERS USE!
THE CLINCHER IS THE AVIATION GAS I SAW OUTSIDE HIS WINDOW LAST NIGHT! *... USEFUL STUFF FOR POWERING THE PLANE!
I WON'T BOTHER TO KNOCK--
--INSTEAD, I'LL GIVE HIM A LITTLE SURPRISE!
*SEE PAGE 9, PANEL 4.
BAMMY!?
CAUGHT ME IN THE ACT, EH, FELLER
WHICH ACT DID I CATCH YOU IN--?
POKIN' THROUGH CRANSTON'S NOTES... SEEIN' HOW MUCH HE FOUND OUT 'BOUT MY OPERATIONS!
YOU'RE SAYING YOU ARE THE BRAIN BEHIND
S'PRISED? SHORE, I'M AN OLD GEEZER... BUT A GEEZER AS HAS DONE PLENTY OF STUDYIN'!
YEARS AGO, I COTTONED TO THE FACT THERE WAS A FORTUNE TO BE HAD 'ROUND THESE PARTS--
16

—RUNNIN' IN THEM STREAMS YONDER! 'CEPT I COULDN'T DO NOTHIN' 'BOUT IT TILL A CITY OWLHOOT CHECKED IN!
HE GOT TO DRINKIN' AN SAID AS HOW HE HAD EVERYTHIN' FOR PRINTIN' MONEY 'CEPT PROPER INK!
ME, I SUPPLIED THAT! HE DIED... LEAVIN' ME KINGPIN!
YOU MADE A MISTAKE BAMMY! NOBODY'S A KINGPIN BEHIND BARS!
OH, I AIN'T GOIN' TO THE HOOSEGOW! TODAY'S YORE BUYIN' DAY FELLER!
THAT'S THE SIXTH GUN I'VE HAD AIMED AT ME IN THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!
A GUY COULD GET BORED..!
--ALSO DEAD! I BEEN TOTIN' THIS DERRINGER SINCE NINETEEN AN' NINETEEN--
CLICK!
--AN' I AIN'T NEVER MISSED WITH IT!
PINNG!
SOMEBODY SHOT THE BULB--!?
17

UNNGH!
SAMMY WILL SL... WHILE I CHASE M... FRIEND THE MARKSMAN!
UNLESS I LEARN IF HE'S REALLY WHO I THINK HE IS, I'LL GO NUTS!
HE'S CROUCHED OUTSIDE THE WINDOW!
KRASH!
I WON'T LET HIM MELT AWAY!
HE'S... VANISHED!
HE... DISSOLVED... IN MY GRASP!
HA-HA-HA-HA HA-HA
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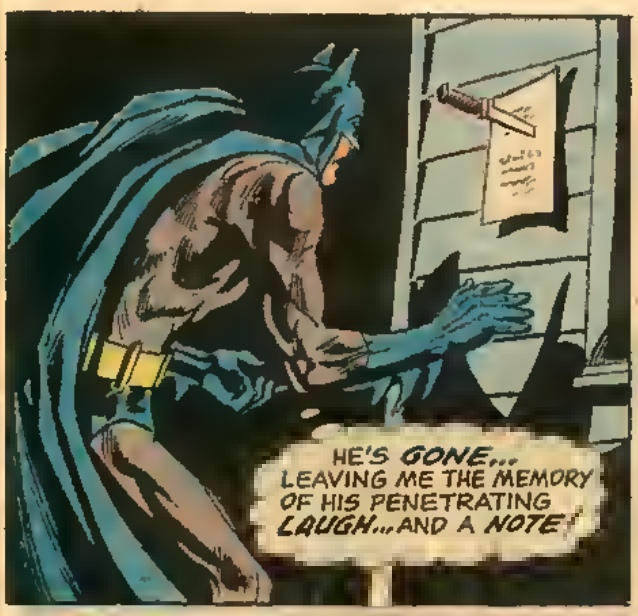
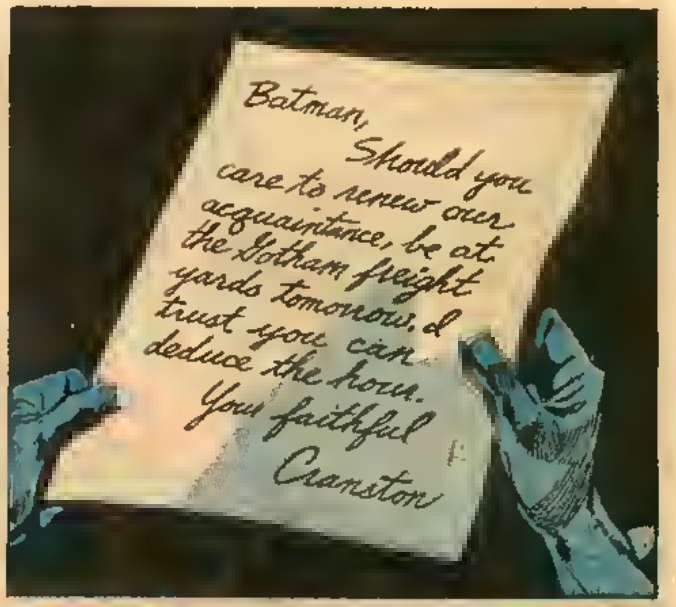
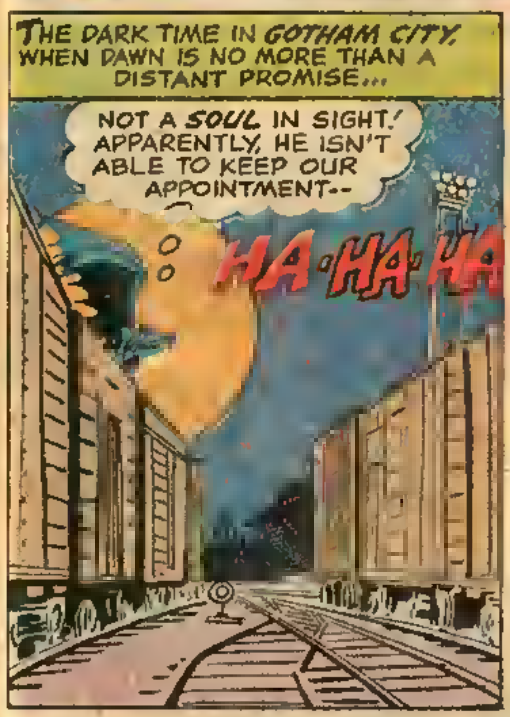
18


HE'S GONE... LEAVING ME THE MEMORY OF HIS PENETRATING LAUGH... AND A NOTE!

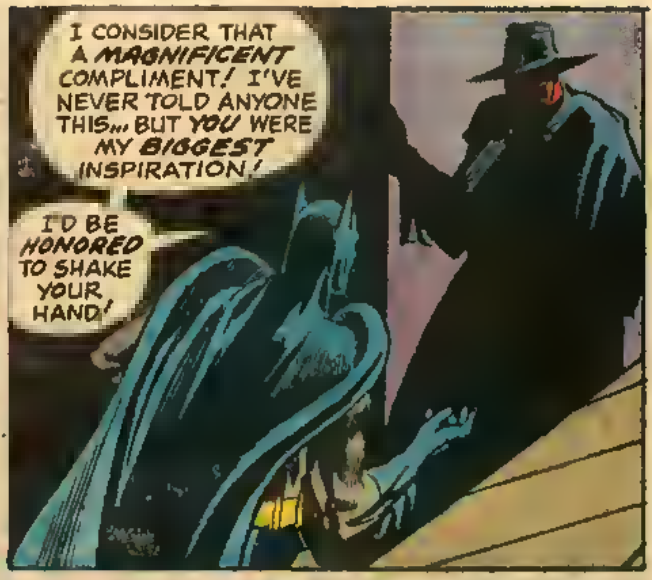

Batman,
Should you care to renew our acquaintance, be at the Gotham freight yards tomorrow. I trust you can deduce the hour.
Your faithful
Cranston

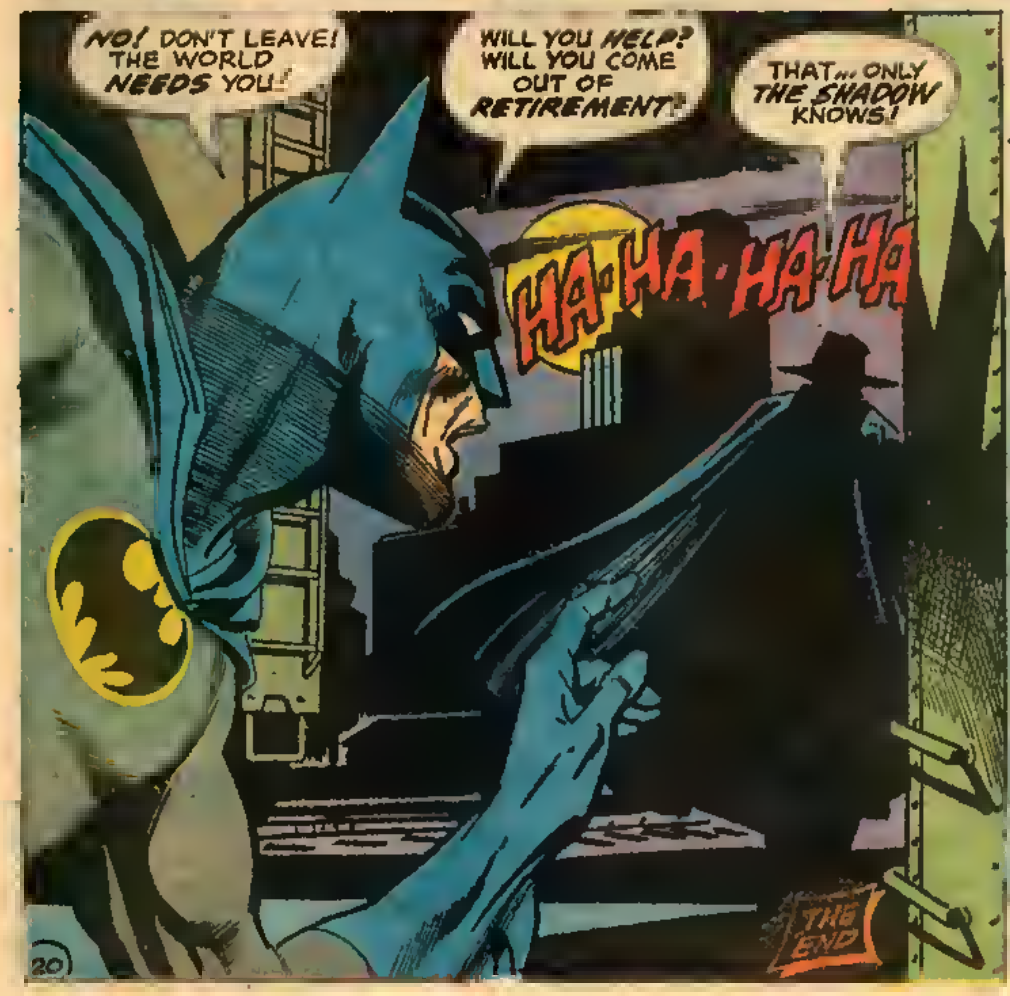

THE DARK TIME IN GOTHAM CITY, WHEN DAWN IS NO MORE THAN A DISTANT PROMISE...
NOT A SOUL IN SIGHT! APPARENTLY, HE ISN'T ABLE TO KEEP OUR APPOINTMENT--
HA-HA-HA

YOU! YOU'RE CALLED...
...THE SHADOW!
I PROMISED WE'D MEET AGAIN!
I HAVE A HUNDRED QUESTIONS TO ASK--!

SUCH AS... WAS IT I WHO CAPTURED THE CRIMINAL YOU WERE PURSUING TWO MORNINGS PAST?
YES! I EMPLOYED HYPNOTIC LORE TO PROBE HIS SUBCONSCIOUS!
HIS INFORMATION LED ME TO TUMBLEWEED CROSSING, WHERE WE MET!

WHY--?
I WAS CURIOUS! I WISHED TO DETERMINE IF YOU DESERVE YOUR SPLENDID REPUTATION!
I AM HAPPY TO STATE YOU FULFILLED MY GREATEST EXPECTATIONS!


I CONSIDER THAT A MAGNIFICENT COMPLIMENT! I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE THIS... BUT YOU WERE MY BIGGEST INSPIRATION!
I'D BE HONORED TO SHAKE YOUR HAND!

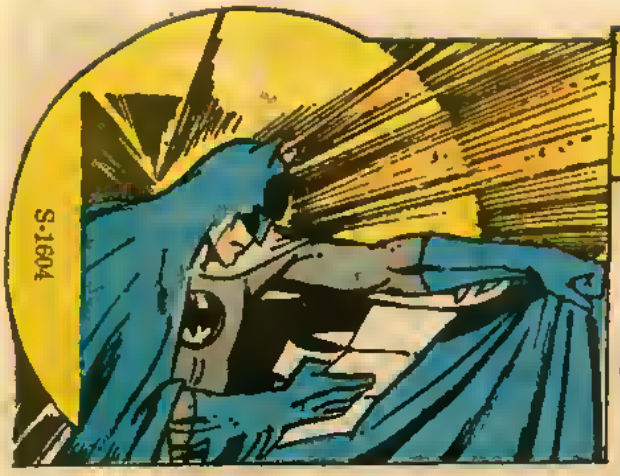

NO! DON'T LEAVE! THE WORLD NEEDS YOU!
WILL YOU HELP? WILL YOU COME OUT OF RETIREMENT?
THAT... ONLY THE SHADOW KNOWS!
HA-HA-HA-HA
THE END

NOW...

SEE THE MYSTERIOUS SLOUCH-HATTED CRIME-FIGHTER CLASH WITH THE FIENDISH HARLEQUIN AS HE STRIVES TO SOLVE "THE FREAK SHOW MURDERS!" IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE... ON SALE IN MID-SEPTEMBER!

WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN--?

THE SHADOW KNOWS!



LETTERS to the BATMAN

Dear Editor:

Again I must compliment you on *Batman*, this time issue #250. In "The Deadly Numbers Game," Frank Robbins provided another fine story with an original plot, smooth-flowing form, good construction, and continuity—articles now present in Frank's stories as opposed to his relatively poor stories of about six months ago. He has improved tremendously and I now look forward to reading his work. Irv Novick and Dick Giordano illustrated this tale as well as ever.

Irv Novick also blended well with Frank McLaughlin as shown in "Return of the Flying Grayson," the *Robin* yarn flawlessly scripted by Elliot Maggin.

Frank Robbins batted out another hit with "The Batman Nobody Knows," a short 6-pager. The ending was surprisingly funny when the three boys recognized Bruce Wayne as *The Batman*. Another good Dick Giordano art-solo accompanied the script.

A final thought: I have been pushing for a MONTHLY *Batman*, but giving the subject even more thought, I came to the conclusion that if you had to push for 12 issues a year, the high quality of the stories would not be there, as happens to some magazines that come out too often. So I guess that 8 issues of just about the best comix magazine out today is better than 12 issues of a second-rate one.

PAUL EDWARDS, N. Bellmore, N.Y.

(Believe us, Paul, while we appreciate your acceptance of Batman *as an 8-times-a-yearer, we would much rather increase the frequency to a* monthly*—guaranteeing no loss in "high quality"—provided we were guaranteed a corresponding increase in circulation!—JS)*

Dear Editor:

I am stunned! *Batman* #250 was more than I expected and here's why:

"The Deadly Numbers Game": Frank Robbins scripted this novelette in the traditional *Batman* style. The style, of course, is the mystery that the Darknight Detective must solve. And what makes it better is when the villain has an intricate method of operation.

"Return of the Flying Grayson": Elliot Maggin hit a homer with this one. I have but one complaint: why would a poster of a group that has been out of business for years be on sale now—and especially after the Graysons had died a gruesome death? I'm willing to let that one pass as well, because Mr. Maggin covered the rest of the elements beautifully, such as the automatic brake on *Robin's* motorcycle. After all, cycles don't grow on trees—they come from *plants!* Time to move on (oooh!) . . .

"The Batman Nobody Knows": A fine thriller—though it was obvious this tale was played strictly for humor. I see it that these youngsters were envisioning *themselves* as the *Caped Crusader*—and to impress their friends at the *same* time, for everyone *must* know what *The Batman* is really like! I chuckled at the end, because this and the *Robin* story ended with kids making monkeys of the *Dynamic Duo!*

Analysis: *Batman* #250 was a triple joy to behold!

CLINT THOMAS, Oak Hill, W. Va.

(Contrast the pleasant aroma arising from this analysis with the "smell" that overwhelmed the next analytical critic.—JS)

Dear Editor:

Frank Robbins' opening story may have been built around a number progression, but it added up to a big zero. Admittedly, one cannot expect a brilliant, full-length tapestry in eleven pages, but Robbins' "The Deadly Numbers Game" was stymied by a lead-balloon conclusion. All of a sudden Gil Adams (a Kane and Neal hybrid?) is Mr. Raven's ward, and notice how smoothly Robbins builds up his punch-line: "Any idea of why he picked on you as his victim? Who are you?" asks *Batman*. There is no transition between these two sentences; it sounds as if *Batman* is reading a cue card. The plot was dead before it was born.

Elliot Maggin's "Return of the Flying Grayson" was a pleasant blend of past and present, but the author falls into the well-trodden trap for comix writers: using narrative for dialogue. On page 3, Robin thinks, "Several valuable works of art were recently stolen from the Barton Museum." The point, you see, is that *Robin* knows this already and would not be thinking like this just to let the reader know what's happening.

"The Batman Nobody Knows" was one of Robbins' best stories since he learned the alphabet. He here captures that wonderful world of children's imagination, a world impervious to our poor excuse for reality. The kids regret the real thing; let the adults play their games, we have the facts!

DAVID DASCH, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Editor:

It's been quite a long time since *Batman* has featured three stories and I suppose that the reason was the amount of space needed to weave a really good yarn. Well, that myth is dead with #250.

"The Deadly Numbers Game" was a well-done detective tale, despite the fact that we were given no opportunity to discover the identity of the crook. It was fun just guessing what historic numbers would be used for each crime.

"The Return of the Flying Grayson" was an above par *Robin* story, though I'm puzzled as to why Dick didn't reveal to the boys that he was the same Grayson as the one in the poster.

Finally, my favorite story was "The Batman Nobody Knows!" Frank Robbins has taken a good story idea and turned it into a delightful story. The ideas about *The Batman* that the three boys had were cute and well-done. As for Bruce's appearance in costume, I got a good chuckle out of it. Let's have more of these human interest shorties in the future. They serve as a nice change-of-pace from the usual stories.

BOB ROZAKIS, Elmont, N.Y.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT! Send all communications to our NEW address: LETTERS TO THE BATMAN, National Periodical Publications, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019.

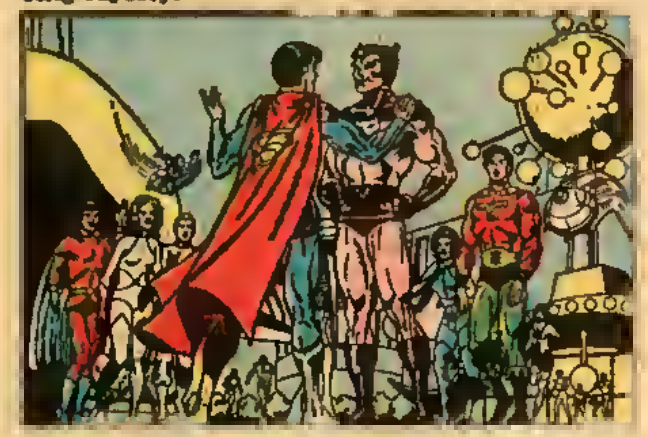
It's time for a historical look at one of *DC's* most interesting features—a group of super-heroes who have been fighting for 15 years to earn a permanent boma in one of our magazines . . .

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

The Legion waa born in the April, 1958 issue of Adventure Comics (#247) when *Superboy* traveled through time to the future to join a club of super-beings. Editor Mort Weisinger never intended them to become regular supporting characters, but the demand for the *Legion* was so great that he had to bring them back dozens of times in the next few years, to play bit parts in practically every one of the *Superman* family magazines that he edited, from *Action* to *Jimmy Olsen*. Even in the days before most comics had letters pages, the *Legion* had a large band of supporters, which seemingly grew along with the super-hero club (It had grown from three members to about 15). Finally, they got their chance at a series of their own . . .

The Bizarros (Anyone out there remember *Superman's* imperfect double and his family?) had worn out their welcome as the back-feature in *Adventure Comics*, so the *Legion* took over with #300 in September, 1962, with *Superboy* soloing in the lead story, as he had for over 15 years.

The Legion's supporters were not going to settle for a mere back-feature; within a year, they had boosted the sales of *Adventure* issues with the *Legion* on the cover so much that our favorite super-stars took over the book—first as a 17-page cover feature, and then with book-length tales in a magazine re-titled *Adventure Comics featuring Superboy and The Legion of Super-Heroes! The Legion* held onto that slot until 1969 when *Supergirl* took over *Adventure* and they moved to the back of *Action Comics*, as they took another step backward on their long odyssey.



When Weisinger retired in 1971, Murray Boltinoff picked up the *Legion* for his stable of characters and featured them in the back of *Superboy*, picking former fans Cary Bates and Dave Cockrum (a life-long *Legion* freak) to handle the creative chores.

The masses of *Legion* fans still weren't happy; they insisted that DC give the *Legion* its own mag again. Everyone at the office thought that they deserved another chance, too, so a *Legion* reprint mag was published to test the sales potential. It succeeded, and if you pick up a new issue of *Superboy*, you'll find that it's now *Superboy* and *The Legion of Super-Heroes. The Legion* has come full circle again, and I hope they stay around another 15 years!

FLASH! The lives of the *Legionnaires* will be changed drastically by the events that are going to take place in *Superboy* #200, so no *Legion* fan can dare to miss that one! Watch *Direct Currents* for the exact on-sale date!

* * * * *

A few months ago, I wrote a *Behind The Scenes* column which talked about the Comic Art Convention, and I mentioned a few things about comic fans. Since then, I've received a number of letters asking more about the world of these people, and how to get involved in fandom. This month, then, let's take a long look at . . .

COMIC FANS!

Comic fans are people who can tell you every issue of every comic that *Superman* ever appeared in, who drew it, and what the title of the story was. They know the date that the new comics are due at their newsstands, and which ones are due out in any given week. They've been known to spend up to $500 for a copy of an old comic book, and deals for whole collections often run into thousands of dollars. They publish magazines about comics, ranging from news to unpublished stories by professional artists like Neal Adams or Berni Wrightson.

Conventions of fans take place all the time, all over the country. Regular monthly "cons" are held in New York City and Boston, and larger, annual affairs, are held in most major cities. If you want to enter the world of fandom, that's the best place to do it! A complete listing of conventions is unavailable, but a good list is available for a stamped, self-addressed envelope from Phil Seuling, 621 Avenue Z, Brooklyn, New York 11223.

It's a bit harder to get a hold of a list of quality fan magazines, however, I'll steer you in the direction of two of the most popular ones, and you can go from there. The first, if the truth be known, is my own magazine. (Secret identity revealing time, folks!) *The Comic Reader*, which is the *TV Guide* for the comics industry, is available from a back named Paul Lavitz at Post Office Box #23, Brooklyn, New York 11203. If you're more interested in reading comics than reading about comics, try *The Menomonee Falls Gazette*, a weekly newspaper composed entirely of comic strips, including Golden Age episodes of Superman and Tarzan, and strips by DC greats like Frank Robbins, Neal Adams, Doug Wildey, and an editor by the name of Archie Goodwin. Write for details to Post Office Box 255, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, 53051.

All this should start you on a career as a comic fan if that's what you're interested in. It's a wonderful world, and a lot of fun, and I hope you'll become a part of it.

—Paul Levitz